

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

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TAGS: PFOR, TH, LA

SUBJ: THAI-LAO RELATIONS

THE FOLLOWING IS AN UNOFFICIAL USIS TRANSLATION OF
EXCERPTS FROM PRIME MINISTER KHUKRIT PRAMOT'S 14 JULY
1975 NEWS CONFERENCE.

BEGIN EXCERPTS.

REPORTS: THE NECESSITY FOR US TO CLOSE DOWN OUR CON-SULATE
IN HUA I SAI AND OTHER CONSULATES IN LAOS, MAKE ME
FEEL THAT THE SITUATION IN THAT COUNTRY IS NOT VERY GOOD.

KHUKRIT: THOSE DEVELOPMENTS HAVE BEEN OCCURRING FOR
A CONSIDERABLY LONG TIME. IN OTHER WORDS, THERE IS A
MOVEMENT IN LAOS, WHICH CALLS ITSELF THE PATRIOTIC MOVEMENT
OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT, WHICH IS ATTACKING AND CHASING
OUT FOREIGN CONSULATES, THIS AND THAT PERSON, AND COMPLETELY
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CHASING OUT AMERICANS. INCIDENTS FIRST OCCURRED IN

SAWANNAKHET AND IN PAKSE. WE WERE INFORMED BY THE LAO GOVERNMENT THAT IT WOULD NOT BE SAFE FOR THAI CONSULATES TO CONTINUE REMAINING IN THOSE AREAS, BECAUSE THE SITUATION WAS NOT VERY SATISFACTORY, THEREFORE IT REQUESTED THAT ALL THAI CONSULATES IN LAOS BE TRANSFERRED TO VIENTIANE. I CONSIDERED THE ISSUE AND FELT THAT THERE IS NO NECESSITY FOR THOSE CONSULATES TO REMAIN IN OPERATION, ESPECIALLY SINCE THE LAO GOVERNMENT HAD INFORMED US THAT THOSE AREAS ARE NOT SAFE. SINCE WE DO NOT WISH ANY UNDESIRABLE INCIDENTS TO OCOUR, WE TRANSFERRED OUR CONSULATES FROM LAOS BACK TO THE THAI BANK OF THE MEKONG RIVER. THAT IS ALL. WHENEVER THE LAO GOVERNMENT GUARANTEES THAT THE SITUATION IN THOSE AREAS IN LAOS IS SAFE, THEY WILL BE TRANSFERRED BACK TO THEIR ORIGINAL SITES.

REPORTER: WAS CONCERN FELT FOR THE SAFETY OF OUR OFFICIALS?

KHUKRIT: SINCE THE LAO GOVERNMENT INFORMED US THAT THEY MIGHT NOT BE SAFE, FOR THESAKE OF PEACE AND QUIET, AS WELL AS TO PREVENT UNDESIRABLE INCIDENTS OCOURRING, ISN'T IT WISER FOR US TO WITHDRAW OUR CONSULATES TEMPORARILY BEFOREHAND?

REPORTER: MIGHT THE FACT THAT LAO OF THE RIGHTWING FACTION FLEE HERE LEAD TO INCIDENTS OCCURRING? WHAT ACTION WILL BE GOVERNMENT TAKE IN REGARD TO THIS PREBLEM?

KHUKRIT: SYMPATHY SHOULD BE FELT FOR OUR GOVERNMENT, BECAUSE IT HAS NEVER INVITED ANY MEMBERS OF THE LAO RIGHT-WING FACTION TO COME HERE. DISPUTES OR DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ITS RIGHTWING AND LEFTWING FACTIONS ARE NO BUSINESS OR AFFAIR OF OURS; THEREFORE WE MUST NOT BECOME INVOLVED. BUT WHEN THEY FLEE FROM DANGER TO OUR COUNTRY, IT IS DIFFICULT FOR US TO CHASE THEM BACK TO LAOS, OR FOR ANY ACTION TO BE TAKEN AGAINST THEM, AT LEAST FOR THE TIME BEING. IT IS THEREFORE OUR DUTY TO KEEP THEM UNDER SUPERVISION, OR TO PUT PRESSURE ON THEM TO GO ON TO SOME OTHER COUNTRY, IF POSSIBLE, AND AS WE ARE DOING ALREADY, AND A LARGE NUMBER HAVE GONE ON TO OTHER COUNTRIES ALREADY. BUT SHOULD THEY NOT BE ABLE TO AFFORD TO GO ELSEWHERE, WE MUST LET

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THEM REMAIN IN THAILAND. WHAT CAN BE DONE SINCE THEY REFUSE TO RETURN TO LAOS? AT THE SAME TIME, FURTHER CONSIDERATION MUST BE PAID TO TRANSFERRING THEM TO AREAS FAR AWAY FROM THE THAI-LAO BORDER, A MEASURE SIMILAR TO THAT TAKEN IN REGARD TO GENERAL PHOUMI NOSAVAN, WHO WAS SENT TO LIVE IN SONGKHLA PROVINCE. IT IS A MEASURE GIVING THEM NO WAY TO CREATE ANY TROUBLE FOR US.

IN REGARD TO THE FEAR FELT BY THE LAO GOVERNMENT THAT MEMBERS OF THE LAO RIGHTWING FACTION WILL SET UP A MOVEMENT IN THAILAND IN ORDER TO PLOT THE STAGING OF A REVOLUTION OR COUP IN LAOS, I WISH TO EMPHASIZE THAT WE WILL NEVER ALLOW THEM TO SET UP A MOVEMENT LIKE THAT IN OUR COUNTRY, UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES. WE DO NOT WANT FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH THE LAO GOVERNMENT TO BE ADVERSELY AFFECTED IN ANY WAY, A GOVERNMENT WE HAVE PROCLAIMED WE SUPPORT MANY TIMES; THEREFORE WE MUST EXERCISE CARE FOR SUCH A MOVEMENT NOT TO BE SET UP UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES. THE THAI GOVERNMENT IS NOT INVOLVED IN AND IS NOT INTERFERING IN LAO INTERNAL AFFAIRS IN ANY WAY AT ALL. WE WILL NOT INTERFERE OR BECOME INVOLVED IN LAO POLITICS, UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES, AND WE DO NOT SUPPORT ANY FACTION WHATSOEVER WHICH IS ANTAGONISTIC TOWARD THE PRESENT LAO GOVERNMENT.

REPORTER: DOES THE GOVERNMENT HAVE ANY POLICY OR PLAN TO REORGANIZE AND IMPROVE ROYAL THAI NAVY PATROL UNITS, ESPECIALLY IN REGARD TO OPERATION OF ITS PATROL BOATS ON THE MEKONG RIVER?

KHUKRIT: I WILL REFRAIN FROM EXPRESSING ANY VIEW ON PATROL BOATS OPERATING IN THAI RIVER AT PRESENT. IT IS A FACT THAT NO INCIDENTS OCCURRED AT ALL WHEN PATROL BOATS OPERATED IN THAI WATERS OF THE MEKONG RIVER DURING THE TIME OF FORMER GOVERNMENTS. INCIDENTS HAVE OCCURRED ONLY NOW, SINCE PATHET LAO TROOPS HAVE COME AND ARE ON THE LAO BANK OF THE MEKONG RIVER. SINCE THOSE TROOPS COULD BE CALLED NEW MEN, THEY MIGHT NOT HAVE A THOROUGH UNDERSTANDING OF WHERE THE THAI-LAO BORDER IN THE RIVER IS. I THEREFORE HOPE THAT WITH INCREASED CARE TAKEN THAT NO FURTHER UNDESIRABLE INCIDENTS WILL OCCUR AGAIN. END EXCERPTS.

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